

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 OSLO 00594 081632Z

46

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-19 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 OMB-01 NEA-11 EURE-00 DRC-01 /125 W

----- 104625

P R 081529Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7780

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

SECDEF

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 594

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS BEXP NO

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT

REFS: A) STATE 23571; B) OSLO 230; C) USNATO 454; D) STATE 12937;
E) OSLO 4681

SUMMARY. DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL INFORMED ME THAT HE FAVORS
THE JOINT, FOUR-NATION PROCUREMENT OF A U.S. AIRCRAFT, PROBABLY
NORTHROP'S COBRA, BUT THAT SOME SORT OF USG "GUARANTEE" WOULD
BE REQUIRED. ALTHOUGH NORWAY WOULD PREFER TO DELAY A DECISION
ON REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT UNTIL FURTHER PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 OSLO 00594 081632Z

TEST DATA BECOME AVAILABLE, FOSTERVOLL APPEARS DETERMINED

TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN GUIDING THE FOUR NATIONS TO A COMMON DECISION. I RECOMMEND THAT WE CONSIDER MEANS OF FORESTALLING AN EARLY BELGIAN OR DUTCH DECISION, THUS ALLOWING FOSTERVOLL TO PROCEED WITH HIS PLANS TO CONVINCE THE ALLIES OF THE ADVANTAGES OF MILITARY STANDARDIZATION THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF A U.S. AIRCRAFT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING DISCUSSION OF F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE WITH DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 6, I STRESSED ONCE AGAIN THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE SELECTION OF AN AMERICAN COMPETITOR. FOSTERVOLL, WHILE SOLD ON BUYING AMERICAN, IS ALSO CONVINCED OF THE NECESSITY FOR NORWAY, DENMARK, BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS TO BUY THE SAME AIRCRAFT. WHEN HE MEETS WITH HIS COUNTERPARTS FROM THE OTHER THREE COUNTRIES, HE WILL EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF ACQUIRING A SINGLE PLANE THAT SATISFIES NATO REQUIREMENTS AND PROVIDES MILITARY STANDARDIZATION. HE HAS RECEIVED POSITIVE RESPONSES TO HIS LETTERS (REF B) AND HOPES TO VISIT THE ABOVE COUNTRIES IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, BUT HE COULD GIVE NO CLUE AS TO WHEN THE PROPOSED JOINT CONSIDERATION OF AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT WOULD TAKE PLACE.

2. ONCE THE FOUR NATIONS ARE ABLE TO DECIDE UPON AN AIRFRAME, ACCORDING TO FOSTERVOLL, THE FIGHTER CAN THEN BE TAILORED TO SPECIFIC NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS WITHIN A NATO "CONFIGURATION." IN THIS CONTEXT, FOSTERVOLL HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR THE NORTHROP P-530 "COBRA" WHICH HE MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES DURING OUR CONVERSATION. HOWEVER, I UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAS NOT YET BEEN BRIEFED BY HIS EXPERTS ON THE RELATIVE MERITS OF THE RESPECTIVE CONTENDERS; THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THESE EXPERTS, WHO ALSO LEAN HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF A U.S. AIRCRAFT (BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE COBRA), COULD CONCEIVABLY ALTER HIS VIEW. FOSTERVOLL HASTENED TO ADD THAT THE PURCHASE OF AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WOULD REQUIRE A U.S. "GUARANTEE." IN RESPONSE TO MY REQUEST FOR A MORE SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF WHAT HE MEANT BY GUARANTEE, FOSTERVOLL DEMURRED AND SAID HE WOULD LET GENERAL HAMRE (DIRECTOR OF LOGISTICS FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE) ANSWER THAT QUESTION; HE DID NOTE THAT "GUARANTEE" MEANS ASSURED REPLACEMENT OF SPARE PARTS. BEHIND THIS INSISTENCE ON A GUARANTEE, I
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OSLO 00594 081632Z

SUSPECT, IS THE NAGGING NORWEGIAN SUSPICION THAT THEY WOULD NOT RECEIVE THE ESSENTIAL USG SUPPLY AND SERVICE SUPPORT FOR AN AIRCRAFT NOT IN THE U.S. INVENTORY.

3. ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE REPLACEMENT ISSUE, FOSTERVOLL SEEMED EVEN MORE CONVINCED THAN IN OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATION (REF B) THAT THE GERMANS WILL BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS AND HE ALLUDED TO RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH UNNAMED GERMAN OFFICIALS

WHO APPARENTLY SHARE HIS VIEW. REGARDING NORWEGIAN PROSPECTS FOR FUNDING THE PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT, FOSTERVOLL APPEARED ENCOURAGED THAT FUTURE REVENUES FROM NORWEGIAN NORTH SEA OIL RESERVES COULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD THIS PURPOSE. FOSTERVOLL CAUTIONED US NOT TO OVERPLAY OUR HAND OR EXERT EXCESSIVE POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE REPLACEMENT ISSUE. I ATTRIBUTE THIS TO FOSTERVOLL'S CONFIDENCE THAT THE U.S. WILL WIN THE COMPETITION IN ANY EVENT AND TO NORWEGIAN DISTASTE FOR THE TYPE OF POLITICAL PRESSURE EMPLOYED BY THE FRENCH, TO THEIR DETRIMENT HERE IN PAST YEARS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION RAISED IN PARA. 2 OF REF. A, MY IMPRESSION BASED UPON OUR CONVERSATIONS HERE IS THAT NORWAY WOULD PREFER DELAYING A DECISION UNTIL AT LEAST PRELIMINARY COMPARISON OF FLIGHT TEST DATA FROM U.S. LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER (LWF) COMPETITION CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE. AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE TEMPO OF ACTIVITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND FRANCE MAY FORCE AN EARLIER DECISION. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. HAS NOT EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN PRODUCING THE WINNER OF THE LWF COMPETITION FOR ITS OWN INVENTORY, THE CONCERN THAT THE ALLIES WOULD BUY ONE TYPE OF FIGHTER AND THE U.S. SELECT ANOTHER, AS STATED IN REF C, IS SHARED BY NORWAY.

5. THE FRENCH SUPER F-1 IS NOT A SERIOUS CANDIDATE IN NORWEGIAN CALCULATIONS, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS INFERIORITY IN PERFORMANCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO THE U.S. ENTRIES, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE NORWEGIAN STRONG PERFORMANCE FOR U.S. SUPPORT. WE AGREE WITH USNATO THAT NORWAY NEEDS TO KEEP ITS LINES OPEN TO THE EC COUNTRIES (REF C, SECTION II A), BUT AN EVEN GREATER NEED IN THE EYES OF THE NORWEGIANS, SINCE THEY OPTED OUT OF THE EC, IS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR TIES TO THE U.S. THE NORWEGIANS PRECOGNIZE, NONETHELESS, THAT THE SUPER F-1
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 OSLO 00594 081632Z

MAY BE AN ATTRACTIVE AIRCRAFT FOR BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS. THEY HOPE, ACCORDINTLY, THAT THEIR EUROPEAN ALLIES COULD DWLAY THEIR DECISION UNTIL THE ADVANTAGES OF PRUCHASING AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT OVER THE SUPER F-1 BECOME CLEARER.

6. MAY OR JUNE OF THIS YEAR APPEARS TO BE THE EARLIEST PRACTICAL TIME THAT A DECISION COULD BE MADE. WHAT WE CANNOT EVALUATE FROM HERE IS WHETHER THE NORWEGIAN PREFERENCE FOR DELAYING THE DECISION TO PRUCHASE AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WILL, IN FACT, INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS WILL OPT BEFORE THE SPRING FOR THE SUPER F-1.

7. AS POINTED OUT BY OTHER POSTS, THE ABILITY OF THE USG TO INDICATE THAT IT WILL GIVE FINANCIAL BACKING TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF AN LWF WITHIN A TIME FRAME THAT

MEETS EUROPEAN REQUIREMENTS IS THE ESSENTIAL MISSING INGREDIENT IN OUR SALES PACKAGE. IF THE USG WERE IN A POSITION BEFORE THIS SPRING TO MAKE A CONCRETE OFFER OF DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO PROSPECTIVE BUYERS FOR WHICHEVER U.S. ENTRY IS SELECTED, IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE FRENCH CANDIDATE COULD WELL BE ELIMINATED FROM CONSIDERATION IN THIS DANGEROUS INTERIM PERIOD PRIOR TO A NORWEGIAN DECISION. THIS WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF ALLOWING NORWAY, BELGIUM, THE NETHERLANDS AND DENMARK TO DELIBERATE AND JOINTLY SELECT A REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FROM AMONG THE U.S. CANDIDATES. WITHOUT SUCH AN INITIATIVE, ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS A DANGER OF A UNILATERAL DECISION BY ONE WHICH WOULD HEAVILY PRESSURE THE OTHER THREE COUNTRIES TO GO ALONG, OR OF THE SEVERAL COUNTRIES' BUYING DIFFERENT AIRCRAFT AT THE EXPENSE OF STANDARIZATION.

8. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT FOSTERVOLL IS MOVING AHEAD AS RAPIDLY AS FEASIBLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIS EXPRESSED INTENTION TO MOULD A CONSENSUS FOR COMMONALITY. WHAT HE MOST NEEDS NOW, ASIDE FROM THE SORT OF U.S. OFFER TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND IN DISCUSSION WITH THE OTHER NATIONS MENTIONED ABOVE, IS TIME. IF WE HAVE ANY LEVERAGE THAT MIGHT DISPOSE THE BELGIANS OR DUTCH TO HOLD OFF ON AN EARLY DECISION, I BELIEVE THIS WOULD USEFULLY COMPLEMENT FOSTERVOLL'S OWN EFFORTS TO STEER THE FOUR NATIONS TOWARD THE JOINT PROCUREMENT OF A U.S. AIRCRAFT.

BYRNE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 OSLO 00594 081632Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT, SPARE PARTS, AIRCRAFT SALES, CONTRACTS, JOINT VENTURES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OSLO00594
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740245/aaaabqms.tel
Line Count: 201
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 23571; B) OSLO 230; C) USNA, TO 454; D) STATE 12937;
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <31 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT
TAGS: MASS, BEXP, NO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005